

## CHAPTER 4

# THE TEAM APPROACH

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

*Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to do the following:*

- *Discuss the team approach when handling customer needs.*
  - *Identify effective ways of improving the team's ability to provide quality service.*
  - *Discuss training techniques when relating to customer service.*
  - *Discuss and take personal inventory of the service you receive as a customer.*
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In the previous chapter, the emphasis was on how YOU should perform at the contact point to meet the customers' needs. However, most contact points consist of more than one person. Together these people work together as members of a team to perform the functions of the contact point. In this chapter, we will concentrate on how the members of the contact point team work together to meet the customers' needs.

### ACHIEVING TEAMWORK

Each member of a football team is an individual. Yet, if each member functions as an individual on the field, the results are easily predictable. Eleven quarterbacks would have a difficult time advancing the ball. Even one or two members acting individually would have a disruptive effect on the team's performance. Whining requires teamwork.

The team is not an entity in itself; it is a group of individuals. You may be a member of that group as a striker, a junior petty officer, a leading petty officer, or a supervisor. Being a member of a team does not deny you the chance to perform as an individual. Rather, it allows you to cooperate and act together with other team members toward a common goal. Thus, a team consists of individual members with varying personal traits—some positive, some negative. To achieve teamwork, you must emphasize the positive traits.

### EMPHASIZING POSITIVE TRAITS

Most team members have some undesirable traits, which they may or may not be aware of. No one would argue the value to both the person and the team of having

undesirable traits identified and corrected. However, emphasizing a person's undesirable traits usually antagonizes the person and accomplishes little. Rather, by emphasizing the person's desirable traits, you may find that the undesirable traits begin to disappear. Most people have a strong desire to be accepted by their peers, and they will adopt the behavior that leads to that acceptance.

### PROVIDING ENCOURAGEMENT

Yea-a-a-a team! The intent of a cheerleader's yell is to infuse spectators with enthusiasm that will give the team members the additional push they need to win. This attitude of encouragement is another important aspect of teamwork. Team members who encourage each other work well together.

### PROVIDING ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE

Providing advice and assistance is an important aspect of teamwork. You might be more proficient in a specific area of your rating because you have had more experience than other team members. When that is the case, offer to provide advice and assistance to those who need it.

Remember, you are not playing a game in which you win or lose—you are providing service. If you see a team member about to make a mistake that could have adverse results for the customer, act to correct it. However, make sure your action is tactful. The scenario might go like this: "John, I may be able to save you some time. This situation is similar to the one that I just experienced a few days ago, and we found that by. . ." Thus, you have acted tactfully to correct the problem by

sharing your experience, but you have not made your teammate feel inferior.

## PROVIDING A POSITIVE INFLUENCE

Each individual exerts some influence on all other members of the team. For example, the member who always has a “Good morning” for everyone influences the team to have a positive attitude. However, the member who always gripes and complains has the opposite effect.

Each member not only influences the mood of the team, but also its work habits. Work habits, in turn, influence the team’s effectiveness in providing service to the customer. The first of the following examples shows how a negative influence can affect teamwork; the second example shows how it can affect customer service:

- A new member reports for duty at your contact point, and you are the first person the member meets. After introductions, you feel it is your duty to give the new member some “survival training.” You begin by saying, “Senior Petty Officer Door is hard to work for, especially when she has it in for you. PO Brush won’t bother you; he’s so lazy it’s an effort for him just to breathe. SN Frost is an eager beaver, but he is handy to have around—you can con him into almost anything.” Giving these opinions places an unfair burden on the new member. Regardless of whether these statements were truth or opinion, they will have influenced the new member’s attitude toward the team.

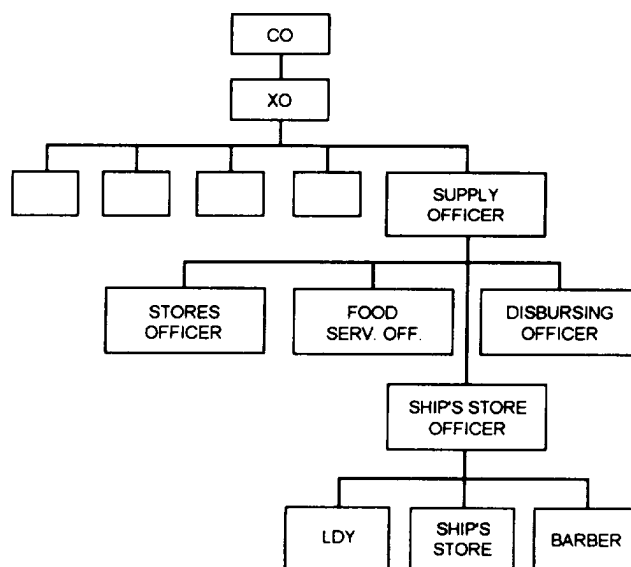
- You are standing at the counter when a customer walks in, and you ask, “May I help you?” The customer then presents a problem that involves several actions. Since you are not sure how to proceed, you ask a coworker. The coworker only gives you a negative shake of the head and advice to “ask the chief.” That doesn’t help much, so you turn back to the customer, muttering to yourself, “The last time I asked the chief for help, he told me to look it up myself—he didn’t have time.” Then to the customer, you say, “Why don’t you tell the chief your problem; he’ll be able to take care of it, and he won’t get mad at you.” You have placed the customer in an uncomfortable position. Your attitude and negative remarks have influenced the customer to feel reluctant to talk with the chief. If the customer chooses not to talk with the chief, the customer will not receive the needed service.

## RECOGNIZING THE VALUE OF EACH JOB

Most contact points have many jobs to perform. Although team members must be able to perform all jobs

at the contact point, they usually perform only one job at a time. Although some jobs may seem less important than others, EACH job is EQUALLY important. Whether the job is receiving leave requests or preparing leave authorizations, team members must recognize the value of each job at the contact point.

To recognize the value of your job, you need to know its purpose in the overall mission of the contact point. Ask questions. Find out how the responsibilities of your job fit into the overall responsibilities of the contact point. You will then begin to understand the value of your job and how your performance contributes to team effort.



## INCREASING YOUR KNOWLEDGE

When considering the job of a contact point representative, we might agree with the old saying that a little knowledge is dangerous. *Dangerous* may be a bit strong, but personnel working at contact points do need to be experts in their own rating to contribute effectively to teamwork.

Your knowledge of other contact points can also be helpful to the customer, especially if customers must visit several contact points to meet their needs. For example, some activities may require a customer to report to different contact points to check in, checkout, reenlist, transfer, or effect separation. You need to know what services customers can receive at other contact points and know how to direct them to those points.

When the customer in case number 3 asked LPO Brush about shipping his personal effects, he was told to ask supply. LPO Brush should have told the customer, "The personal effects office on base makes all the arrangements for personnel moves. When we moor, you take copies of your orders and go talk to a contact point representative at that office. Most likely the representative will schedule you for an interview in which you will be asked specific questions about your personal effects. You may be asked about furniture weight, storage requirements, special handling requirements, and desired pack-out and delivery dates."

## SETTING PRIORITIES

We rarely have enough time, energy, or resources to do everything that we need to do or that we would like to do. To achieve teamwork, you must evaluate demands to ensure the most important ones receive the most attention. That will keep you from bogging down in details and routines that leave little time for the important tasks.

## COMPROMISING

It has been said that a wise man isn't as stubborn about anything as a fool is about everything. Not only are we unable to do everything we want to do, we often cannot do things our way. Contending with opposing points of view is just part of life—and of achieving teamwork.

Compromise may be seen as a dirty word because the idea of individualism gets mixed up with personal preference. Compromise is not defeat; it is recognizing that there might be a better way to do something and being mature enough to explore it.

## ASKING FOR HELP

In chapter 3, we discussed the importance of knowing your limitations. One such time is when the problem exceeds your knowledge or ability to handle it. That frequently happens since most contact points have a wide range of responsibilities and few members know all the answers. One of the main advantages of teamwork is that help is normally available when you need it. Taking advantage of that help prevents risking an error that could result in unnecessary hardship or inconvenience for the customer.

Whether to ask for advice or assistance or to refer the customer to someone else depends largely on the nature of the problem and the complexity of its solution. If the situation permits, you can often ask questions that will help you decide whether you should handle the problem yourself.

If your questions fail to gain enough information to solve the problem, don't expect the customer to know automatically where to go for help. Instead, provide the customer with that information yourself. If you are unsure of the contact point to which you should refer the customer, take the needed steps to find out.

Be courteous to all customers when trying to solve their problems. But be especially courteous to those who are relatively inexperienced and new to the Navy. For example, suppose you need to refer a customer to a contact point in the immediate area of your building. You might escort the customer to that contact point, introduce the customer, and explain the problem. However, when you make the referral, your manner should assure the customer that you are NOT "passing the buck," but that the other contact point can best provide the service.

The following scenario is a good example of how asking for help can result in teamwork to solve a problem:

The ship's crew had just completed an UNREP and was settling back into the underway routine. Mail call, one of the more pleasant aspects of UNREP, had been passed and everyone was eagerly catching up on the news from home. The personnel office was no different—the members were engrossed in their letters and occasionally sharing stories about what their loved ones had said or done.

PNSN Frost looked up as ET2 Door rushed into the office, "May I help you?"

"I hope so! I've got a problem!"

"Lay it on me."

"I've got to get a new ID card for my wife."

"Did she lose her card?"

"No. Those people back at the base took it away from her—said it wasn't any good!"

"Do you know why?"

ET2 Door unfolded a letter and reread a portion of it. "She didn't say. She had gone to the commissary, and the man at the door took it—said it wasn't any good."

PNSN Frost thought for a moment, shook his head, and turned to PN3 Doe, "Doe, I need some help. Door just received a letter from his wife, and she said that her ID card was taken by the commissary. She was told it wasn't any good."

As PN3 Doe came to the counter, he asked PNSN Frost to get Door's record. "Your wife didn't say why the card wasn't good?"

"No, she didn't."

"Do you know if it had been damaged in such a way that it would appear to have been altered?"

"I don't think so. At least, she never said anything about it. I don't think it's right for the card to be taken away from her. I'm a million miles from home; and she can't go to the commissary, the exchange, or the hospital. She's going to have a baby, and she has to go to the hospital for regular checkups. I think it's a raw deal."

"It does sound like it, but there has to be a reason. Let's see if we can figure out what the problem is." After PNSN Frost got the record, PN3 Doe opened it and began to leaf through the pages. He located the DD Form 1172 (application form for dependent's ID card) and glanced over it. "She got the card just over a year ago. Is this information correct?" He turned the record so that Door could read the form.

"Yes; she never had any trouble with her card before," ET2 Door replied.

Then an entry on the form caught PN3 Doe's eye—the expiration date! It was a month ago! Quickly, he turned to the enlistment contract. It had the same expiration date, but there was also an extension agreement. "Door, have you ever filled out a new application form?"

"No. Should I have?"

"I'm afraid so. Looks like we both goofed. Her card was issued with the expiration date of your enlistment.

That was a month ago. You're now on your extension. That explains why the card was picked up. It wasn't any good; it had expired. Well, we can correct this problem." PN3 Doe obtained the forms from the cabinet and returned to the counter. "It will just take a minute for me to type a new application. Then you can sign it, and we'll get it in the mail to your wife. She can take it to the personnel office on the base, and that office will issue her a new card."

ET2 Door was silent for awhile, then he said, "We won't have any mail leaving this ship for over a week. Then it will take up to 2 weeks for the letter to reach her. She will be without a card for almost a month. Can't she get it any quicker than that?"

PN1 Seaman had followed part of the conversation while he was going through the incoming mail. Upon hearing ET2 Door's question, he came over to the counter. He greeted ET2 Door, turned to PN3 Doe, and asked, "Anything I can do?"

"Maybe." Briefly PN3 Doe related the problem. "Door just had a letter from his wife. The base commissary picked up her ID card because it had expired. His extension went into effect last month and no one thought to get a new card for her. I'm filling out the application now, but as Door just said, getting her a new card is going to take some time. Is there a faster way for her to get her card?"

PN1 Seaman replied, "Yes, there is. We can send a message. You have handled this problem very well, Doe. Go ahead and finish the application, have it signed, and leave it and his record on my desk. I'll have to check a couple of references; then we'll draft a message that will authorize the issuance of a new ID card. The message will go out today, and Mrs. Door should get it tomorrow or the next day. She can take it to the base personnel office as soon as she receives it, and that office will issue her a new card. Oh, don't worry about her medical care. She can obtain that without her ID card. She just has to sign a form at the hospital."

In this instance, PNSN Frost sought help for a situation that he couldn't handle. PN3 Doe responded well to the customer, but he was providing a routine solution for a problem that was more than routine; however, he quickly accepted PN1 Seaman's offer to help. Although PN1 Seaman could have offered to help sooner, he was able to provide the proper solution. ET2 Door was fortunate to have had his problem resolved by teamwork at its best.

When you are faced with a problem that exceeds your ability to solve—use the team's ability.

## **FINDING SOLUTIONS WHEN HELP IS UNAVAILABLE**

You will experience times when you are temporarily on your own with no one to whom you can turn for help. In such instances, you must still recognize the limits of your ability and be sure that your actions are correct. Had PNSN Frost been alone in the office when ET2 Door came in, he would have faced this type of situation. Probably, he could have groped his way to the solution decided upon by PN3 Doe, but that would have been the more difficult route to take.

In this type of situation, you can still benefit from teamwork. When you have a question, take either of two actions: (1) make a note of your question so that you can ask for help at a later time, and then take action after you receive that help; or (2) have the customer return when a qualified person will be present. In either case, be sure the customer understands why you are not taking action at that time. The best way to ensure that is by admitting, "I don't know, but I'll find out."

## **IMPROVING TEAMWORK**

Now that we have looked closely at the team members' responsibilities to the contact point, let's examine some of the ways of improving contact point effectiveness. Improving contact point effectiveness is not the sole responsibility of the supervisor, or the senior petty officer, though that person must bear the bulk of the responsibility.

Studies of management have shown that the most efficient supervisors delegate responsibility for specific duties as soon as personnel demonstrate their ability to handle them. That does not lessen those supervisors' overall responsibility, but frees them from routine matters, which enables them to give more attention to nonroutine problems. Delegating responsibility also provides excellent training for junior members.

Delegating responsibility meets an important need in the member—recognition. The member who has acquired the ability to handle more difficult jobs and has indicated a willingness to assume more responsibility should be given greater responsibility. Giving a member greater responsibility provides an incentive for further improvement.

## **PLANNING THE LAYOUT OF THE CONTACT POINT**

Large sums of money, a lot of talent, and an endless volume of energy went into the overall design, purpose,

and function of the Apollo capsule. Combined these components provided not only the technical means for the mission, but also an environment in which astronauts could perform at their peak ability. Few contact points have been designed this carefully. As a rule, the Navy merely provides a space to be used as the contact point; it is up to the members of the contact point team to make it functional.

A physical layout that provides maximum efficiency and convenience for the members but disregards customer accessibility will operate under a handicap. The opposite is equally true. Therefore, the physical arrangement (location of desks, counters, etc.) must provide for both the customers and the team members.

Specifying a layout for furniture or traffic patterns is impractical. However, in planning the furniture layout and traffic pattern, team members must consider the comfort of the customers as well as their own. Planning must not be based on the idea that "I'm the one who has to do the work; if someone has to be uncomfortable, let it be the customer." That attitude is not compatible with providing good service. Observe the following guidelines in planning the layout of furniture and traffic patterns:

- Provide a traffic pattern that prevents a line of customers from extending through a doorway.
- Provide a counter or table on which customers may fill out forms.
- Provide chairs at contact points ashore that are visited by dependents.
- Provide a measure of privacy in the arrangement of the contact point for those times when customers must provide information of a personal nature.
- Designate someone at large contact points to greet customers and direct them to the proper place. That should keep customers from waiting in a line only to discover later that they were in the wrong line.

## **CREATING A POSITIVE ATMOSPHERE**

We have already discussed the influence that the member exerts on the contact point. Now let's consider the other side of influence. How much does the atmosphere of the contact point (the general attitude of

all team members) affect each team member individually?

As the supervisor or other senior member of a team, you exert the greatest amount of influence on that team. As the leader, not only are you the one who sets the example for the rest of the team, you are the one who creates either a positive or a negative atmosphere. Refer to Case No. 3. LPO Brush provided a negative atmosphere through two poor work habits. First, he used profanity and allowed other members to use it. Second, he measured office effectiveness by empty baskets rather than by the quality of response to customer needs.

A contact point representative may read chapter 3 of this book carefully and fully intend to implement its “do this” and “don’t do that” advice. However, the extent to which the representative may apply that advice depends largely on the contact point atmosphere. You must take the lead in developing and reinforcing an atmosphere that improves teamwork.

Each team develops its own standards for performance and behavior. These standards are a composite of the standards of all of its members, which must be acceptable by the contact point supervisor. The team then exerts its influence on each member to conform to those standards. New members being indoctrinated in their duties are aware of the attitude of the team toward those standards. As they develop their job skills, they will likely develop and accept a similar attitude.

Setting a good example is the best possible method of creating a positive atmosphere. When team members see that you have a positive attitude toward work, they will follow your example. As new members develop their work habits, they will look not only at the example you set, but at the example set by other team members.

## ENCOURAGING THE ACCEPTANCE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Chapter 1 stated that there are no unimportant jobs when you are performing a personal service or supplying a personal need. You can carry this statement a step further— **there are no unimportant jobs**. The output from a particular job may have doubtful value, but the performance of that job is important to the performer. The performer must be able to see some worth in the job to maintain a sense of personal worth. If convinced that the job has no purpose or value, the

performer assumes that the supervisor considers the job to be of little value.

At times, a person’s ability far exceeds the ability required to perform an assigned job. When you make such assignments, explain the reason for the assignment and the value of the job. That will help confirm the person’s sense of personal worth and, thus, improve teamwork. The following are examples of explanations you might use:

- This job isn’t as challenging as other jobs that you have had in the past but, it is certainly as important. To make this point, it is part of our training rotation. I know that you will do well.
- This work must be kept on schedule; I trust you will do that in my absence.
- You’ll be starting your new assignment next week. In the meantime. . .

You may stimulate the initiative of a new member by using the job assignment itself. Let the member know that this is the first in a series of assignments that will increase in responsibility with each job change.

You may stimulate the initiative of a new member by using job assignments as the first in a series of increases in responsibility. The Navy’s most valuable asset—people—is wasted when they are told to “look” busy. Supervisors who instruct their people to look busy demonstrate their own lack of initiative (poor planning) and destroy initiative in team members.

Supervision can stimulate a team to better performance, or it can smother any initiative. Suppose a supervisor asks, “Can’t you people do anything on your own?” Then the supervisor constantly looks over the workers’ shoulders and criticizes their work. The supervisor’s action has answered the question: No, the members can’t do anything on their own; the supervisor won’t let them.

You must keep the lines of communication open. Though you must encourage members to work on their own, you must assure them that they can come to you for answers when the need arises. Your response may vary, depending upon the need and the person, but it should not lead the member to an endless, aimless search.

You can take three steps to encourage team members to assume responsibility:

1. Recognize their ability.
2. Set goals for them.



### 3. Acknowledge their achievements.

#### **Recognizing Ability**

To recognize abilities is to recognize the individual. If we were to randomly select a Navy rating and then from that rating select a rate, these people would be as different in their abilities as they are in appearance. Matching job requirements to individual abilities is just good management. This job match should not be looked upon as being permanent, but as a logical beginning for training.

#### **Setting Goals**

"This instruction just came in. I want you to study it." This supervisor has given the team members one reason they should read the instruction: "I want. . ." This approach gives them no motivation to read it; they do not know how, why, or when to use the instruction? A different approach would provide more motivation: "We just received this instruction covering new pay procedures that will go into effect the first of the month. I'll route it around so that all of you can read it. Next week, we will have a training session on the contents." Using this approach, the supervisor has told them how, why and when.

Goals must be meaningful and realistic if team members are to consider them seriously. Ideally, goals should be set just above the level that the person is currently achieving. If they are too low, there is no challenge—the goal has already been met. If they are too high, the member is likely to reject them. If failure is certain, why go to the trouble of trying?

Goals may be set for individuals or for the team. They may be set as a part of, or in connection with, the division training program.

#### **Acknowledging Achievements**

Rare, indeed, is the person who will conscientiously do a job, day after day, without some recognition. Members normally receive recognition for performance at the outstanding performance level. However, those who perform considerably below the level of outstanding also need to receive recognition. Make an effort to recognize those personnel who perform at a less notable level. The following are some examples of the positive effects of such recognition:

- The new member is just learning the job. Recognition of achievement may provide a needed boost toward increased ability.

- The “plodder” has shown unusual initiative. Recognition may be the incentive needed to pull that person out of a rut.
- The capable, dependable member always does a good job. Recognition communicates your awareness of and your appreciation for that person’s performance.

For whatever reason recognition is given, it must be honest. The member usually knows when performance has been satisfactory and when it has not. Regardless of whether the job is good or bad, say so. If for some reason it happens to be bad, say why. Indiscriminate flattery can be as bad as no recognition. After all, if the member gets a pat on the back for every job—good or bad—where is the incentive to do a good job?

## **PREVENTING MISTAKES**

Improving teamwork as a supervisor involves helping team members avoid mistakes without interfering with their performance. One way to help prevent mistakes is to make a constant check of every job as it is being done. A better way is to assign members to jobs only after you feel they are capable of doing the work. Then check completed work as a regular procedure, and make sure members know that you check it. That will enable you to detect any errors so that you can reintroduce policies and procedures needed to help members avoid carelessness.

Earlier in this chapter, we discussed how PN1 Seaman demonstrated this type of supervision in the example of the expired ID card. He did not interfere as his coworkers tackled the problem and identified the cause. When he saw that the best solution had not been found, he gave PN3 Doe an opportunity to ask for advice. If he had not asked, PN1 Seaman could then have suggested the possibility of a message. As important as his solution was to ET2 Door, his tact in handling the situation was even more important to the team. In no way did he belittle what the team had done, and he used a work situation as a training opportunity.

Here is another example of supervision that improved teamwork without interfering with performance. A group of PNs were receiving training as interviewers. As a final part of the interviewers’ training, they conducted actual interviews at a recruit training command. They conducted the interviews in small interview booths with only the recruit and the trainee present. The supervisor monitored the trainees’ performance through a concealed microphone in the interview booth. The interview validity was not affected

since the recruit was not aware of the monitoring. If a trainee did not perform an interview properly, the supervisor casually entered the booth and made a plausible excuse to consult the interviewer. The supervisor then sent the recruit out for a 5-minute break and, while the recruit was out, made suggestions to the interviewer for improving the interview technique.

Supervisory responsibility is inherent as portrayed by your rating badge. The higher the rate, the greater the responsibility. You don’t gain this responsibility by only pointing out mistakes. You must do much more. You must be available for advice or to do whatever it takes to get the job done.

Members often make mistakes and errors in judgment because they want to avoid the displeasure or sarcasm some seniors display when asked for help. When that happens, who is at fault? But beyond fault, who is the loser when a mistake is made? Although the senior is at fault, the entire team suffers. Consider the following example:

MSSN Doe is fixing spaghetti sauce for the noon meal. Everything is coming along fine until he starts to add the seasoning. The recipe card is smudged and all he can read is: Pepper, cayenne 2 T. Does that “T” mean teaspoon or tablespoon? He starts to ask the watch captain, then hesitates. The last time he asked for help, he received several pointed remarks about his ancestry. In the end, the question still went unanswered. Looking back at the card, he mumbles to himself, “That’s a fairly large batch of sauce, and a teaspoon is pretty small—it must be a tablespoon.”

MSSN Doe finishes the sauce, and the sauce finishes the crew—no doubt that he should have used a teaspoon.

## **MEETING TRAINING NEEDS**

In trying to improve teamwork, supervisors often substitute criticism for proper training. Criticism is a reflection of poor supervision and usually results in unfair treatment of team members. A better way to improve teamwork is through training. The excuse “We don’t have time for a training program” is not valid. If the contact point is that busy, you can’t afford not to train.

We will not go into methods and techniques of training; adequate materials are available on these topics. Rather, we will offer some ideas that you can use in the informal training situation.



Too often we limit the concept of training to classroom instruction. We forget that training is a constant process in everyone's development. That may be even more apparent in the Navy because of the frequency of transfers. There is always someone transferring out and a new replacement reporting in. Even though skilled in the job, the replacement must learn local procedures and adjust to local problems and working conditions.

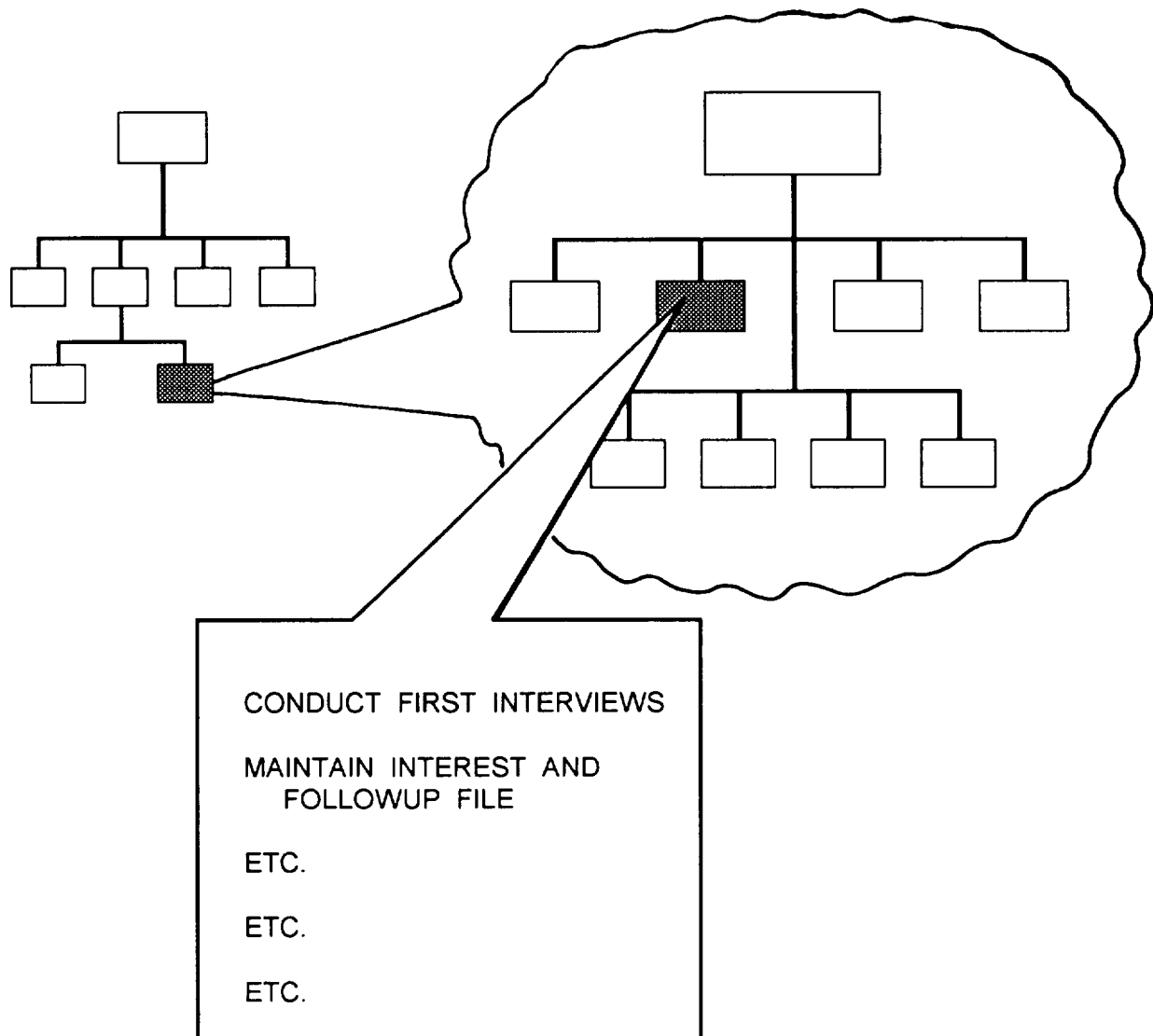
**Each new member presents an immediate need for training.** The extent of the training needed is determined by the person's prior training and experience. The training needs may be met through three important steps:

**1. Greeting the member pleasantly.** While this act of courtesy is not training in the strictest sense, it sets the attitude of the new member toward the team and

opens the door for other team members to follow the example.

**2. Teaching the basics immediately.** The supervisor can quickly determine the new member's need for this training from information gained through an interview. The responsibility for providing this training may be assigned to other members of the team; the method used must be appropriate for each individual.

**3. Providing follow-up.** This step is just as necessary as the training step, from both the viewpoint of the supervisor and the new member. A follow-up lets the supervisor know how the member is progressing and what additional training is needed. It shows the supervisor's interest in the members progress and opens lines of communication.



Supervisors must be able to provide individualized training as well as group training. To do that, they must be accessible to the member and be willing to take the time to help the member when needed. They will quickly realize the compensation for this greater emphasis on training in the reduction of time they spend supervising. They need no outstanding ability or special training for this phase of supervision, but they must develop the following skills:

- Listening patiently. Quite often supervisors may feel that the person is taking too much time explaining, so they stop listening. Thus, they may miss the main reason for the member's communication with them.

- Refraining from hasty condemnation or conclusion. Supervisors must get the whole story before making decisions.

- Refraining from arguing. Arguing with a subordinate does not solve problems, and it may well lead to additional ones. One of the responsibilities of supervisors is the exercise of authority. After observing the two points above, a supervisor who reaches a decision and feels there is no justifiable alternative should stick with that decision. Argument will only intensify the member's reluctance to accept that decision.

- Paying attention not only to the content of the remarks but to the overtones and body language. What the member feels but does not say may be more important than what is actually being said.

- Listening for what the person may be reluctant to say or cannot say without assistance.

Learning is best accomplished when the instruction sets a pattern of primacy. That is, it moves from known to unknown, simple to complex, and complex to simple; or it is organized by performance steps. In other words, the trainee should learn how to follow a recipe and operate an oven before attempting to bake a cake. If instruction is arranged properly, the trainee can refer back to what was previously learned to better understand what is being presently taught. When this method is applied, the member learns more, learns it faster, and remembers it longer.

The use of training sessions can achieve the following results:

- Stimulate trainees to perform self-evaluation.
- Develop trainees' awareness of their knowledge level.

- Provide trainees with needed instruction.
- Encourage trainees to exchange ideas and knowledge.

As the leader of an informal training session, you must keep the group headed in the right direction. You should direct discussion sessions toward a stated or an agreed-upon goal. Training sessions provide excellent opportunities for frank, open discussions of mechanical problems as well as problems with work flow, time allocation, future work loads, and special jobs. The leader of informal training must be vigilant in preventing the session from losing focus. No one wants to listen to someone's gripes during a training session.

Role playing can be an effective means of developing face-to-face skills and of stimulating discussions about problems faced by certain ratings. When properly introduced to the participants, it has several possible uses in the training program. Since participants may be self-conscious at first, your first efforts in using role playing may not get off the ground. However, when participants realize they are not playing games, they will gradually assume their roles. Then role playing will achieve the desired results of training.

With an experienced member playing the role of the customer and the inexperienced members serving as the contact point representatives, you can provide real life experiences for members to solve. Select training problems that are not intended to overwhelm the trainees but to acquaint them with typical problems. Make sure each situation has a specific training objective.

## **DEVELOPING THE "WE" CONCEPT**

People who are "loners" are determined to get to a destination without owing anyone for anything. They refuse to help others, belittle everyone else's accomplishments, and avidly point out others' mistakes. These people have great difficulty working as a member of a team.

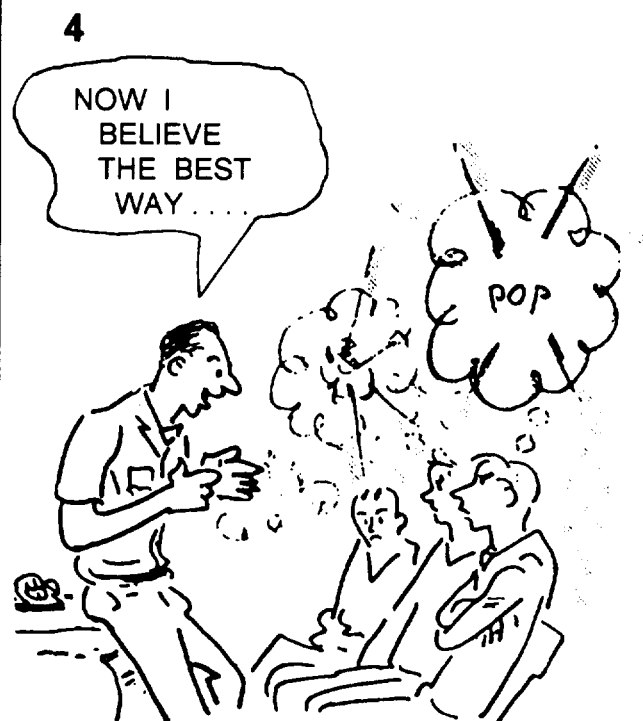
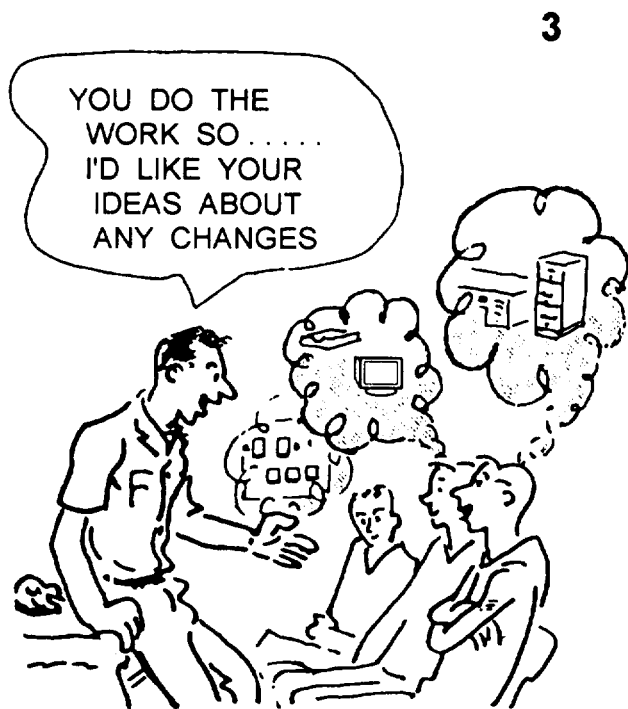
Teamwork improves only when all members overcome this problem by learning to view themselves as part of the team. To help them do that, encourage them to begin thinking in terms of we:

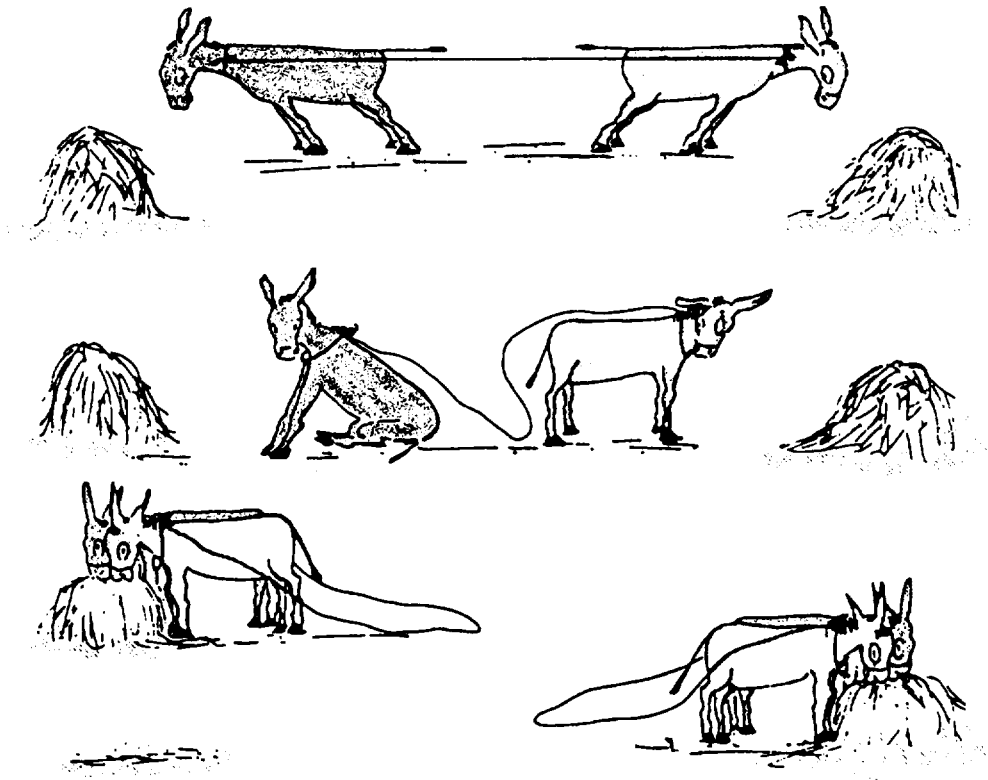
We members of the contact point. . .

We members of the ship or station. . .

We members of the Navy . . .

Help them to see that being a member of a team doesn't take away from their importance. Help them to





see that working as a member of a team improves the effectiveness and productivity of the contact point.

### DEVELOPING CONFIDENCE

Confidence is that quality that enables us to make decisions or to take actions without the constant fear that we might be wrong. It doesn't rule out mistakes, but we are less likely to make them when our evaluation of facts is not muddled by nagging doubts. **Confidence also enables us to face a mistake, admit it, correct it, and then go on to the next job with the assurance that we can handle it.** When team members develop confidence in their abilities, they become willing to help their teammates as well as the customers. Team members working together is what teamwork is all about.

### BENEFITING FROM MISTAKES

You benefit from incorrect decisions and actions if you learn how to avoid repeating your mistakes. Many supervisors recognize that when they say, "I don't condemn mistakes as long as you don't continue to make them." When team members recognize the consequences of a mistake, they are less likely to repeat the same mistake. Therefore, a mistake, discovered and corrected, helps to improve teamwork.

When an assistant burned out the filament of an experimental light bulb by applying too heavy a charge of electricity, Thomas Edison remarked, "Don't call it a mistake; call it an education." Adopting this positive attitude enables us to obtain the maximum value—for the customer and for ourselves—from our work.

### MAKING A PERSONAL INVENTORY

Now that you have completed reading this manual, you probably have been able to relate some of the situations to experiences you have had. Have you also tried to find similarities between the attitudes that you possess and those shown in the examples and discussions?

The questions that follow have been adapted from the checklist used in chapter 2; use them to make a personal inventory of your skills as a contact point representative:

- Do I present a good personal appearance at the contact point?
- Am I familiar with all the responsibilities of my rating?
- Am I competent to manage all the responsibilities of my current assignment?

- Have I organized my work and time so that I give the most efficient service possible?
- Am I aware of the importance of records, and do I keep them current and complete?
- Do I know the content and arrangement of publications regularly used at my contact point?
- Do I speak and write clearly and understandably to the best of my ability?
- Do I accept the responsibility for doing my job as it should be done so that constant supervision is not necessary?
- Do I show consideration for my coworkers by what I say and do?
- Do I treat each customer as an individual with individual needs?
- Do I analyze customers' problems correctly so that the first action I take is the proper action?
- Do I provide the same quality of service to all customers regardless of their grade, rate, or personal characteristics?
- By not handling a problem as I should, do I cause delays or other inconveniences to the customer?
- When I answer a customer's question, am I absolutely certain that the information is correct?
- Does my response to the customer reveal a pleasant, friendly nature?
- Does my response to the customer show a willingness to help?
- Does my response to the customer indicate concern for the problem?
- Does my response to the customer instill confidence in my ability?
- If I were the customer, would I be satisfied with the service I received?

